

**CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR
COURT INTERPRETERS IN THE RHODE ISLAND JUDICIARY
Adopted August 2009**

Introduction

The following Code of Conduct for Interpreters in the Rhode Island Judiciary shall apply to all interpreters in the Rhode Island court system.

Canon 1. Accuracy

Source language speech should be faithfully rendered into the target language by conserving all the elements of the original message while accommodating the syntactic and semantic patterns of the target language. The rendition should sound natural in the target language, and there should be no distortion of the original message through addition or omission, explanation or paraphrasing. All hedges, false starts, and repetitions should be conveyed; also, English words mixed into the other language should be retained, as should culturally bound terms which have no direct equivalent in English, or which may have more than one meaning. The register, style, and tone of the source language should be conserved.

Guessing should be avoided. Court interpreters who do not hear or understand what a speaker has said should seek clarification. Interpreter errors should be corrected for the record as soon as possible.

Canon 2. Impartiality and Conflicts of Interest

Court interpreters and translators are to remain impartial and neutral in proceedings where they serve and must maintain the appearance of impartiality and neutrality, avoiding unnecessary contact with the parties.

Court interpreters and translators shall abstain from comment on cases in which they serve. Any real or potential conflict of interest shall be immediately disclosed to the court and all parties as soon as the interpreter or translator becomes aware of such conflict of interest.

Canon 3. Confidentiality

Privileged or confidential information acquired in the course of interpreting or preparing a translation shall be protected and upheld by the interpreter and translator. Knowledge of information obtained in the performance of their official duties shall not be used for personal gain or the personal gain of any other person.

Canon 4. Limitations of Practice

Court interpreters and translators shall limit their participation in those matters in which they serve to interpreting and translating, and shall avoid giving advice, expressing their personal opinion, or otherwise engaging in activities that may be construed as the practice of law.

Canon 5. Protocol and Demeanor

Court interpreters shall conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the standards and protocol of the court and shall perform their duties as unobtrusively as possible. Court interpreters shall reflect proper court decorum and behave with dignity and respect towards the court officers and personnel. Court interpreters shall also avoid any professional or personal conduct which could discredit the court. Court interpreters are to use the same grammatical person as the speaker. When it becomes necessary to assume a primary role in the communication, they must make it clear that they are speaking for themselves.

Canon 6. Maintenance and Improvement of Skills and Knowledge

Court interpreters and translators shall strive to maintain and improve their interpreting and translation skills and knowledge.

Canon 7. Accurate Representation of Credentials

Court interpreters and translators shall accurately represent their certifications, accreditations, training, and pertinent experience.

Canon 8. Impediments to Compliance

Court interpreters and translators shall bring to the court's attention any circumstance or condition that impedes full compliance with any Canon of this Code, including interpreter fatigue, inability to hear, or inadequate knowledge of specialized terminology and must decline assignments under conditions that make such compliance impossible. Interpreters shall also report to the proper judicial authority any effort to impede their compliance with any law, any provision of this code, or any other official policy governing court interpreting and translating.